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ABSTRACT

This 8-week interdisciplinary unit for fourth- and fifth-grade students helps children address the U.S. westward expansion in the 1840's using the interactive software program, The Oregon Trail. The unit provides connections to literature, geography, computer/mathematics skills, language arts, and research skills. The work is done in cooperative groups over the course of the unit with a variety of assessment strategies suggested. Worksheets, handouts, and student materials are included. Upon completion of the unit students will be able to: (1) locate and identify the states along the Oregon Trail; (2) identify reasons for westward expansion; (3) gain a basic understanding of some of the native North American culture; (4) participate in collaborative group activities; and (5) demonstrate knowledge of life in the 1840s--food, clothing, families, etc. Selected bibliography contains 32 items. (EH)

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Westward Expansion: The Oregon Trail.

by James F. Salisbury

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SCHOOL: Elementary

GRADE LEVEL: 4-5

THEMATIC UNIT: Westward Expansion: The Oregon Trail

Curriculum Connections: Literature ~ Stories of and about the Old West and America's move to the Pacific.

Geography ~ Learning about the states west of the Mississippi, Identifying locations along the Oregon Trail.

Computer/Math Skills ~ The interactive software program, The Oregon Trail, integrating problem solving and math math skills; estimating, calculating, etc.

Language Arts Skills ~ Prepare a and present short book report it to the class.

Library Skills ~ Developing research strategies and investigating numerous sources of information.

Overview: Students will be studying the westward expansion of the United States over the next 8 weeks. Rather than concentrating on this portion of American History in isolation, the class will incorporate geography, literature, computer skills and oral skills into this unit. They will be making comparasions between their lives and the lives of the pioneers as they moved westward to settle. Through the literature they will learn about the hardships these people endured and the many problems and obstacles they overcame.

Subject Objective: Upon completion this unit the students will be able to;

- 1) locate and identify the states along the Oregon Trail,
- 2) identify reasons for the westward expansion
- 3) gain a basic understanding of some of the native North American cultures
- 4) participate in collaborative group activities.
- 5) demonstrate knowledge of life in the 1840's - food, clothing, families, etc.

Materials: Maps, computer and software, assorted fiction and non-fiction accounts of westward expansion and life along the Oregon Trail

Activities: After the first meeting in the library, the class will be broken up into five cooperative work groups. Over the 8 weeks the class will be assigned several overlapping projects. As one group is working to "travel" the Oregon Trail, two others will reading and preparing their book reports. The fourth group will be studying map skills. The fifth group will research different aspects of life in the 1840's and present their findings in the form of a poster.

Assessment: Final assessment for this unit will be multifaceted. The students will write a letter home to a friend or family member telling about an adventure or experience they had along the Oregon Trail. Each group will also prepare a short report on trip along the Oregon Trail, their experiences and and success in reaching Oregon.

Evaluation: These activities will be used to measure the students application and synthesis of the material/ information gained during the previous 7 weeks. Assessment will be both individual and collective.

Follow up Activity: As a follow up activity, the class may e-mail to schools along the Oregon Trail seeking additional information.

OREGON TRAIL IMPLEMENTATION CHART

WEEK 1: Overview - Whole Class

WEEK 2: Map lesson - Whole Class

WEEK 3-6: Small Group Activities; Oregon Trail Computer Program, Book Reports, Research on Pioneer and Native North American Life.

Week 7: Whole Group Activities; Create Posters, Continue Book Reports, and Present Biographies, Create Guest List and Invitations to Celebration Week 8.

Week 8: Culminating Activity: Posters presented, Discussion on Level of Success with Oregon Trail, Display and Explain Work to Invited Guests (Friends and Family). Students, Classroom Teacher, and LMS All Encouraged to Dress for Celebration.

SMALL GROUP SCHEDULE

WEEK OREGON TRAIL BOOK REPORTS PIONEER LIFE N. A. LIFE

3	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
4	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 1
5	Group 3	Group 4	Group 1	Group 2
6	Group 4	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3

LESSON 1: OVERVIEW OF THE OREGON TRAIL

TOPIC:

Students will be introduced to reference materials, fiction, and non-fiction titles, and will select the appropriate material for research on the Oregon Trail.

UNIT CONTEXT:

This is the first lesson in the eight week unit: A JOURNEY ALONG THE OREGON TRAIL.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- (1) Students will be able to select appropriate reference materials about the Oregon Trail for their topic.
- (2) Students will select a book for an oral report.
- (3) Students will brainstorm a semantic web about Westward Expansion, contributing at least two words for the semantic map.
- (4) Students will participate in a preliminary small group activity aimed at team building.

CONTENT:

This lesson as an overview will have several purposes. The LMS will read BROTHER EAGLE, SISTER SKY to introduce the class to Native North Americans and Westward Expansion. The whole group will participate in building a semantic web about the Oregon Trail. The LMS will show books and resources available and students will begin to select books for their oral reports. Finally, small groups will be established (collaboratively by the teacher and LMS) and groups will engage in problem solving activity as a group, solving a hidden word puzzle.

METHODS:

Objective #1 will be directed instruction by the LMS, objectives #2, 3, and 4 students will be working independently with the LMS facilitating as necessary.

MATERIALS:

A selection of fiction and non-fiction materials about the Oregon Trail, markers and chart paper, BROTHER EAGLE, SISTER SKY, tanagram or other problem solving activity, book report form.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT:

Students will begin reading selected books, completing book report forms and preparing oral report.

LESSON EVALUATION:

Evaluation will be ongoing. Students will be formally evaluated on book selection, choosing a topic, and participation in the semantic exercise, as well as by observing group interaction and cooperation.

LESSON 2:

MAPPING THE OREGON TRAIL

TOPIC:

This lesson will familiarize the students with the route of the Oregon Trail.

UNIT CONTEXT:

As the 2nd lesson in the 8 week unit: A JOURNEY ALONG THE OREGON TRAIL, this lesson will focus on geography.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- (1) Students will work collaboratively to complete a poster size map of the Oregon Trail.
- (2) Students will work individually or in pairs to complete individual maps of the Oregon Trail, locating at least six locations along the trail.
- (3) Students will apply knowledge of westward expansion to expand the semantic web by adding at one word to their semantic web.

CONTENT:

This lesson will combine whole group and individual activities. The LMS will display an historical map of the United States on the overhead projector. Working as a whole group, the students will complete the map and transcribe it onto poster board for display in the library. Then the students working individually or in teams will complete their own maps to be placed in their OREGON TRAIL FOLDERS. Finally the students will add information to the semantic web, which is also on display in the library.

METHODS:

In both the whole group and small group activities, the LMS will facilitate student learning. The LMS will demonstrate map skills to the whole group and discussion will be used for patterned learning.

MATERIALS:

Overhead projector screen, markers, transparencies, maps of the United States - for overhead and student folders, student folders, semantic map on the Oregon Trail (lesson #1), and poster board.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT:

Students will begin to log journal entries about their book onto their OREGON TRAIL FOLDER.

LESSON EVALUATION:

Students will be evaluated on their completed maps, journal entries, and their interaction skills with their partners and in the large group.

LESSON 3:

TRAVELING THE OREGON TRAIL

TOPIC:

This lesson will introduce the interactive computer software program, THE OREGON TRAIL .

UNIT CONTEXT:

As the 3rd lesson in the 8 week unit: A JOURNEY ALONG THE OREGON TRAIL, this lesson will explore the computer program, THE OREGON TRAIL.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- (1) The students will estimate and problem solve the needs and cost of their journey based on the preliminary information provided by the computer program.
- (2) Students will discuss all problems they encounter along the Oregon Trail and arrive at group decisions.
- (3) Students will predict the outcome of the program prior to beginning the journey and record their predictions in their OREGON TRAIL FOLDERS.
- (4) Students will compare the outcome of the program after completing the journey with the earlier predictions, recording them in their journals.

CONTENT:

The LMS will introduce the interactive computer program, THE OREGON TRAIL to the whole group. Each week for the next 4 weeks, one small group will journey along the trail using the computer program. Students will predict, estimate, problem solve, and offer solutions during and after using the computer program.

METHODS:

The LMS will facilitate the small groups' work, providing direct instruction for the computer software during the introductory phase.

MATERIALS:

Computer, computer program, THE OREGON TRAIL , and student folders, and journals.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS:

Students will write a summary about their journey along the Oregon Trail, evaluating their success in reaching the Oregon Territory, or explaining why they were unable to do so. Each group will be responsible for a single report, but it will be a collaborative effort of the entire group.

LESSON EVALUATION:

Formally, the students will be evaluated on their decision making strategies as evidenced in the printed log at the end of the trail. Informally, student interaction in the group will be observed.

LESSON 4:

PIONEER LIFE

TOPIC:

This lesson will focus on the life of the pioneers along the Oregon Trail.

UNIT CONTEXT:

This lesson will familiarize students with the way of life for the pioneers along the Oregon Trail.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- (1) Students will state at least three factors of pioneer life.
- (2) Students will explain one critical fact about pioneer life; transportation problems, food, clothing, etc.
- (3) Students will locate at least four communities and landmarks along the Oregon Trail and be able to explain their significance to the pioneers.
- (4) The importance of using the reference material in reaching objectives 1-3 will be reinforced by the LMS as the students research pioneer life.
- (5) Students will begin working on group poster and individual biographies.

CONTENT:

With small groups focusing on various learning activities, the group in lesson #4 will experience pioneer life. They will use diverse fiction and non-fiction literature as well as pictures, drawings, and photographs which depict life along the Oregon Trail.

METHODS:

This lesson is primarily independent study with the LMS providing assistance to each group as needed.

MATERIALS:

Trade books on westward expansion and visual representations of the pioneers, their families, etc. Biography worksheet.

OREGON TRAIL FOLDER.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS:

Students in small groups will be assigned individual biographies to be completed individually and one poster per group about the pioneers, their life, their journey along the trail, or other topic as it relates to the Oregon Trail.

LESSON EVALUATION:

The biographies and posters will be used in evaluating the students performance for this part of the unit, as they are finished. Evaluation will be based upon appropriate selection and use of material in completing objectives 1-3, and in using information to construct group poster and write biographies.

LESSON 5:

NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN CULTURE

TOPIC:

This lesson will focus on the culture and way of life of Native North Americans.

UNIT CONTEXT:

The unit will familiarize the students with some of the diverse Native American cultures, and possibly their reaction to the invasion by the pioneers onto their land.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- (1) Students will state at least four facts about a previously selected Native American culture.
- (2) Students will explain three aspects of everyday life of Native American; food, housing, beliefs and customs.
- (3) Students will be able to locate habitats of the particular Native American nation they have selected.
- (4) The importance of using reference material in reaching objectives 1-3 will be reinforced by the LMS as students research Native American cultures.

CONTENT:

Students, using various media, will examine everyday life of Native North American. Fiction, non-fiction, paintings, and photographs depicting life will be considered to give the students a better understanding of life for Native Americans as they began to come into contact with the pioneers in their move west.

METHODS:

Students will work individually and within their own small group, focusing on various learning activities, including reading and writing. The LMS and classroom teacher will be available for guidance and assistance in locating appropriate materials as needed.

MATERIALS:

Trade books on some of the diverse Native American cultures, visual representations of Native Americans and aspects of their life and culture. Biography worksheet. OREGON TRAIL FOLDER.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS:

Students within the small groups will be assigned short biographies to complete (individually) and one poster per group on a topic relating to Native Americans or an aspect of their culture or life.

LESSON EVALUATION:

Posters and written biographies will be used to evaluate student understanding and comprehension, as well as the selection and use of materials in completing objectives 1-3.

LESSON 6:

BOOK REPORTS

TOPIC:

During this lesson, the students will begin writing book reports.

UNIT CONTEXT:

As the 5th lesson in the unit, groups 2 and 3 will present their book reports to the entire class.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- (1) Students will demonstrate basic knowledge of their selected book by; completing and presenting their reports, and answering two or three questions about the book which were not explicitly part of the book report sheet.
- (2) Students will prepare oral presentations for the entire class.
- (3) Students will share knowledge within their group on pioneers, Native North Americans, or any other topic relevant to their selected book.
- (4) Students will continue to add words to the semantic web using knowledge gained from completing their book report assignment.

CONTENT:

The LMS will set aside time during the library period, bringing the smaller groups together as a single unit for the oral presentations.

METHODS:

The class work within their small groups being assisted by the LMS as necessary. Twenty minutes at the end of the class will be set aside to allow for the presentation of the completed book reports.

MATERIALS:

Students will have the book, the completed book report form and their OREGON TRAIL FOLDER.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS:

Students will complete form and be prepared to present to class and answer additional questions concerning the book, its plot, and its characters.

LESSON EVALUATION:

LMS will determine the student's knowledge on book. Criteria will include; A) completeness, B) knowledge of story and characters beyond the book report, and C) effectiveness of the oral presentation.

LESSON 7: PREPARATION FOR CULMINATING ACTIVITIES

TOPIC:

This lesson will serve to begin to bring closure to the unit.

UNIT CONTEXT:

To provide the students the opportunity to complete any unfinished tasks and coordinate all projects for an open house presentation for invited guests.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- (1) Students will synthesize materials gathered from the previous assignments; learning centers, group activities, book reports, and map exercise into posters and biographies.
- (2) Students will demonstrate an in depth knowledge of the Oregon Trail through oral and written communications, including book reports, individual biographies, maps, semantic web and posters.
- (3) Students will create a guest list and invitations to share in a classroom celebration of their work over the past 7 weeks.

CONTENT:

The LMS and classroom teacher will coordinate with students in completing incomplete assignments. Preparations will be made to host open celebration.

METHODS:

The classroom teacher and LMS will serve as facilitators, providing guidance and logistic support to the students as necessary.

MATERIALS:

Book reports, biographies, maps, OREGON TRAIL FOLDER, books, posters, pictures, drawings and photographs collected and used during the project.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS:

Students will complete unfinished assignments, collect and coordinate completed assignments, set displays of their work, prepare and deliver invitations.

LESSON EVALUATION:

Evaluation will be based upon the completion of all individual and group assignments, preparations for the the unit ending celebration the following week, and students' plans for coordinating the event.

LESSON 8: CULMINATING ACTIVITIES FOR THE OREGON TRAIL UNIT

TOPIC:

Today's lesson will celebrate the students' learning and showcase their work Along the Oregon Trail.

UNIT CONTEXT:

As the final lesson in the Oregon Trail unit, this lesson will be an opportunity for the students to share their knowledge and display their work on the Oregon Trail.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- (1) Students will orally give a brief summary of their book reports or
- (2) give a short description of the person they had highlighted in their biographies.
- (3) Students will explain the map, semantic web, posters, folders, and other work to the invited guests.

CONTENT:

The LMS will coordinate this celebration with the classroom teacher. Other students, teachers, families and community members will be invited to the library. Students will explain their visuals and demonstrate the computer program, THE OREGON TRAIL . The LMS and classroom teacher will dress in the clothing of the period and the students will be encouraged to do so also. At the completion of presentations, the class and invited guests will return to the classroom for celebration, representing the the students successful journey along the Oregon Trail.

METHODS:

The method of instruction for this lesson will be demonstration by the students.

MATERIALS:

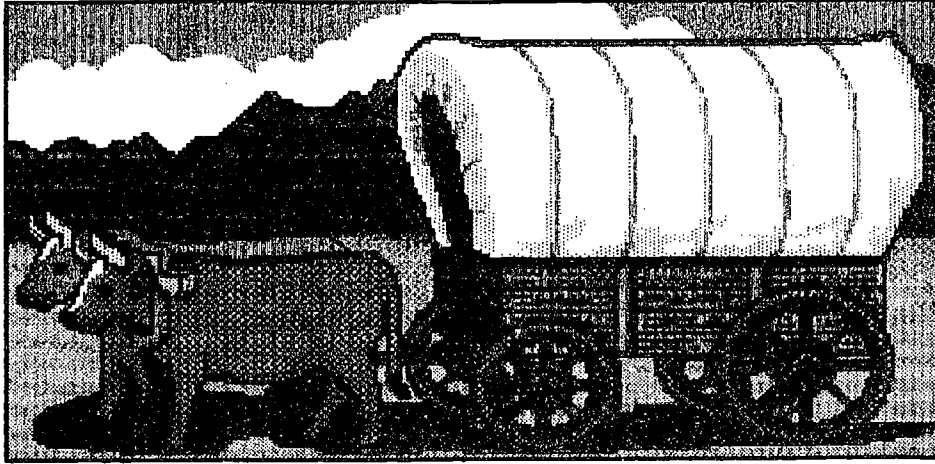
Student folders with all the entries on the Oregon Trail, maps semantic web, posters, visual displays, computer, and the computer program, THE OREGON TRAIL .

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS:

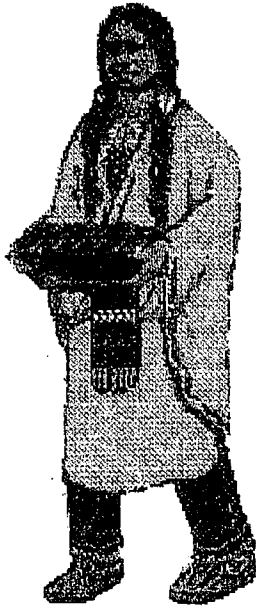
Students will have all materials ready for presentation; book reports, biographies, logs, maps, etc.

LESSON EVALUATION:

The students' folders and their completed work will provide the basis for the unit evaluation as well as the weekly observations made by the LMS and classroom teacher during this unit.



A JOURNEY ALONG THE OREGON TRAIL



NAME



PIONEER DAYS

Pioneer life was tough. Perhaps if some people had known of the difficulties that lay ahead, they never would have left the relative comfort of the eastern settlements, but we salute those brave souls, nevertheless.

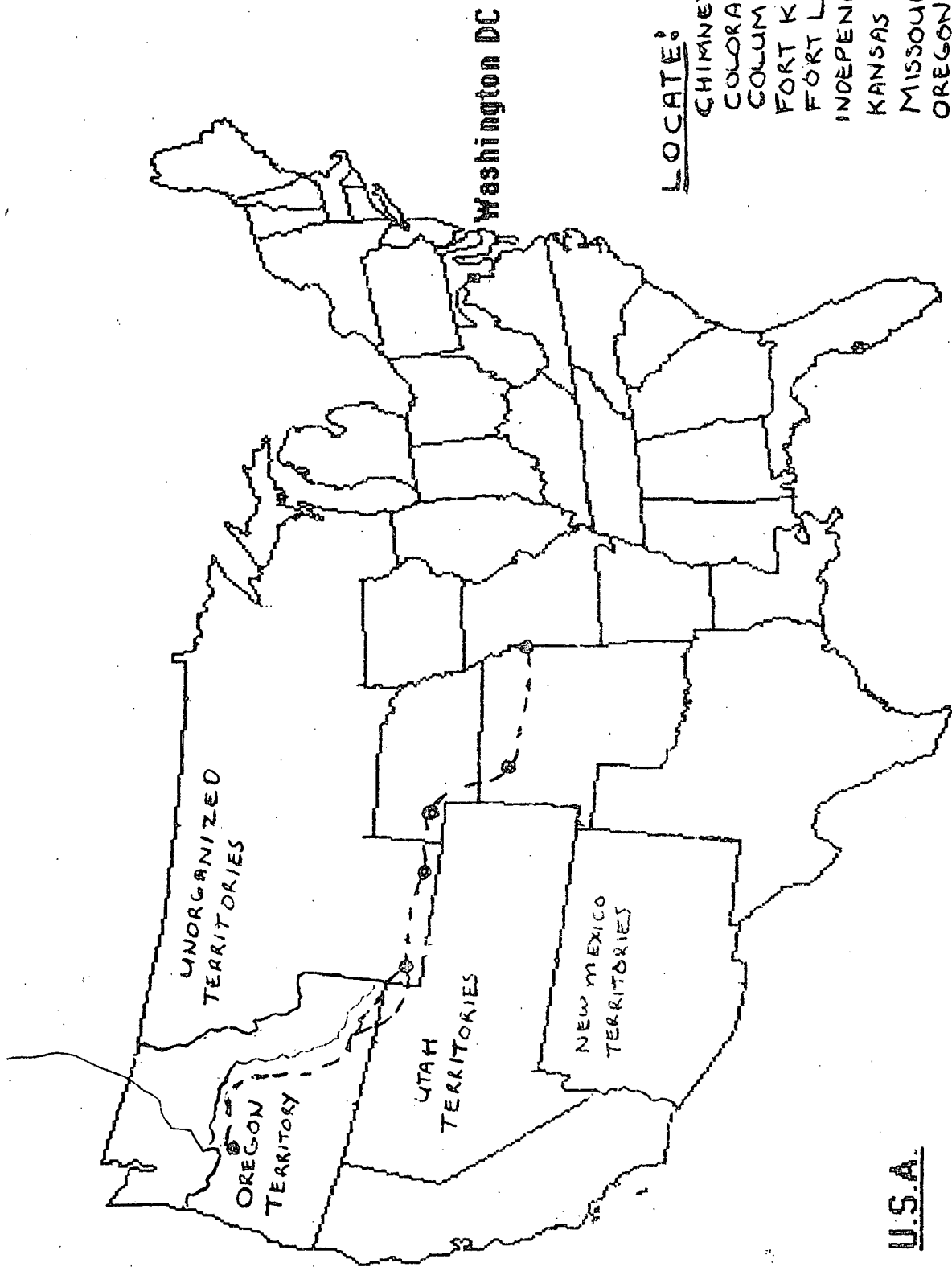


1. ARTISANS
2. BUFFALO
3. CARAVANS
4. CATTLE
5. CAUSE
6. COURAGE
7. COVERED WAGON
8. COWBOYS
9. DESERTS
10. DREAMS
11. EXPLORE
12. FARMS
13. FEARS
14. FIGHT
15. FOES
16. FREE
17. FURS
18. GOAL
19. HARDSHIP
20. HILLS
21. MARVEL

P A S T E S M A E R T S E S Y
 F L T N C C S R E V I R L N K
 A A O A Y O L N E X O V N I T
 Z V R W B U F F A L O O L A R
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 R C L A H T P I H S D R A H B
 S S L E S Y O B W O C A Z U T

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| 22. NATION | 31. SCARS |
| 23. OXEN | 32. SKILL |
| 24. PAST | 33. STORMS |
| 25. PERILS | 34. STREAM |
| 26. PLAINS | 35. TREND |
| 27. PLOWS | 36. VIGIL |
| 28. RANGERS | 37. WHEAT |
| 29. RIVERS | 38. WILDERNESS |
| 30. SAVAGE | |

Answer on page 96



U.S.A.

LOCATE:

CHIMNEY ROCK
COLORADO
COLUMBIA RIVER
FORT KEARNEY
FORT LARAMIE
INDEPENDENCE MO
KANSAS TERRITORY
MISSOURI
OREGON
SNAKE RIVER
SODA SPRINGS

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BOOK REPORT

NAME _____

A. TITLE: _____

B. AUTHOR and ILLUSTRATOR: _____

C. PUBLISHER and DATE PUBLISHED: _____

D. MAIN CHARACTER(S): _____

E. WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THIS BOOK to a FRIEND? WHY?
WHY NOT? _____

F. WHICH ONE of the MAIN CHARACTERS WOULD YOU LIKE to
MEET? WHY? WHY NOT?: _____

G. IF YOU COULD, WHAT WOULD YOU ASK THEM?: _____

BIOGRAPHY FORM

NAME of PERSON: _____

PIONEER or NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN:

IN a few SENTENCES, TELL the STORY of THIS PERSON

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

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SOFTWARE:

THE OREGON TRAIL MECC Corp. ver. 1.2 1991.

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